



Early Journal Content on JSTOR, Free to Anyone in the World

This article is one of nearly 500,000 scholarly works digitized and made freely available to everyone in the world by JSTOR.

Known as the Early Journal Content, this set of works include research articles, news, letters, and other writings published in more than 200 of the oldest leading academic journals. The works date from the mid-seventeenth to the early twentieth centuries.

We encourage people to read and share the Early Journal Content openly and to tell others that this resource exists. People may post this content online or redistribute in any way for non-commercial purposes.

Read more about Early Journal Content at <http://about.jstor.org/participate-jstor/individuals/early-journal-content>.

JSTOR is a digital library of academic journals, books, and primary source objects. JSTOR helps people discover, use, and build upon a wide range of content through a powerful research and teaching platform, and preserves this content for future generations. JSTOR is part of ITHAKA, a not-for-profit organization that also includes Ithaka S+R and Portico. For more information about JSTOR, please contact support@jstor.org.

UNIFORM ENTRANCE EXAMINATIONS IN ENGLISH LANGUAGE AND LITERATURE *

A committee of ten was appointed at the last annual meeting of the Association to consider the present usage in the matter of entrance examinations in English language and literature in the colleges of the Association, and to present, if deemed wise, a scheme of uniform entrance requirements in English, to be offered as suggestion or recommendation to the several colleges of the Association.

The first meeting of the committee was held at the University of the City of New York on Thursday, Friday, and Saturday, February 22, 23, and 24, 1894, and was called to order by the Chairman. Mr. William H. Maxwell was elected Secretary. All the members of the committee were present at the sessions. Circulars of inquiry were sent to the colleges of New England, the Middle States, and Maryland, and also to the preparatory schools of the same states, asking for a statement of experience in English work and for an expression of opinion as to the desirability of certain specified forms of entrance requirements now in use. The recommendations of the committee of ten appointed by the National Educational Association were in the main endorsed by the committee. The following recommendations in particular were favorably considered:

1. That any examination set should be based upon the reading of certain masterpieces of English literature, not fewer in number than those at present recommended by the Commission of Colleges in New England on Admission Examinations.
2. That certain of these books should be of a kind to be read by the candidate as literature; and that others—a limited number—should be carefully studied under the immediate direction of the teacher.

* Abstract of Report of Committee appointed at the meeting of the Association of College and Preparatory Schools of the Middle States and Maryland, December 2, 1893. The members of the Committee were: James W. Bright, George R. Carpenter, Wilson Farrand, Edward L. Gulick, James Morgan Hart, Roland S. Keyser, William H. Maxwell *Secretary*, Felix E. Schelling, Albert H. Smyth, Francis H. Stoddard, *Chairman*.

3. That each of the whole number of books should be representative, so far as possible, of a period, a tendency, or a type of literature; and that the whole number of works selected for any year should represent with as few gaps as possible the course of English literature from the Elizabethan period to the present time.

4. That the candidate's proficiency in composition should be judged from his answers to the questions set, which should be so framed as to require answers of some length and to test his power of applying the principles of composition.

5. That formal grammar and exercises in the correction of incorrect English should in no case be more than a subordinate part of the examination.

It was further agreed that the task of working out in detail the application of these general principles could be done by small sub-committees, which were then appointed. The general committee then adjourned, to meet in Philadelphia May 17, 18, and 19 at the University of Pennsylvania.

It will be noted that the conclusions reached seemed to make it impossible for the committee to adopt the system of requirements for admission now in use in most of the colleges of New England under the initiative of the New England Commission. The adoption of this system would have given the very great advantage of securing uniformity of usage in the colleges of New England and of the Middle States, and the argument in favor of adopting it was strong because the system had proved to be in many respects of practical value. But expressions of opinion to the effect that these requirements, useful as they had been, were no longer fair or complete tests of results of the best methods of teaching English, came in great numbers, and from persons of great authority, in reply to the requests for information sent out by the committee; and the conclusion was finally reached that a new system of requirements must be framed. To make such a scheme of requirements without the aid and co-operation of the New England colleges seemed unwise. Friendly correspondence was therefore opened with Professor Poland, Secretary of the Commission of Colleges in New England on Admission Examinations, and by the courteous invitation of that body the Chairman of this committee met the Commission for conference at its annual meeting, held in Boston, April 20. After some discussion, the Commission ap-

pointed a committee of three, consisting of Professor Winchester, of Wesleyan University (Chairman), Professor Albert S. Cook, of Yale University, and Professor Le Baron R. Briggs, Dean of Harvard College, to meet in Philadelphia, May 17, and to act in co-operation with the representatives of the Middle States and Maryland. By a subsequent action of the Association of Colleges and Preparatory Schools of New England, Mr. John Tetlow, Head Master of the Girls' High and Latin schools of Boston, and Mr. W. C. Collar, Head Master of the Roxbury Latin School, were appointed as delegates to represent the New England Association at this Philadelphia conference.

This Conference recommends:

1. That the time allowed for the English examination for entrance to college be not less than two hours.
2. That the books prescribed be divided into two groups—one for reading, the other for more careful study,
3. That in connection with the reading and study of the required books parallel or subsidiary reading be encouraged.
4. That a considerable amount of English poetry be committed to memory in preparatory study.
5. That the essentials of English Grammar, even if there is no examination in that subject, be not neglected in preparatory study.

Although the Conference believes that the correction of bad English is useful in preparatory study, it does not favor an examination in this subject as a requirement for admission to college.

The Conference recommends that the following scheme of entrance requirements in English be adopted by the various colleges.

Entrance Requirements.

NOTE—No candidate will be accepted in English whose work is notably defective in point of spelling, punctuation, idiom, or division into paragraphs.

1. *Reading.*—A certain number of books will be set for reading. The candidate will be required to present evidence of a general knowledge of the subject-matter, and to answer simple questions on the lives of the authors. The form of examination will usually be the writing of a paragraph or two on each of several topics, to be chosen by the candidate from a considerable number—perhaps ten or fifteen—set before him in the examination paper. The treatment of these topics is designed to test the candidate's power

of clear and accurate expression and will call for only a general knowledge of the substance of the books. In place of a part or the whole of this test, the candidate may present an exercise book, properly certified by his instructor, containing compositions or other written work done in connection with the reading of books.

The books set for this part of the examination will be:

1895: Shakespeare's *Twelfth Night*; *The Sir Roger de Coverley Papers* in *The Spectator*; Irving's *Sketch Book*; Scott's *Abbot*; Webster's *First Bunker Hill Oration*; Macaulay's *Essay on Milton*; Longfellow's *Evangeline*.

1896: Shakespeare's *A Midsummer Night's Dream*; Defoe's *History of the Plague in London*; Irving's *Tales of a Traveller*; Scott's *Woodstock*; Macaulay's *Essay on Milton*; Longfellow's *Evangeline*; George Eliot's *Silas Marner*.

1897: Shakespeare's *As You Like It*; Defoe's *History of the Plague in London*; Irving's *Tales of a Traveller*; Hawthorne's *Twice Told Tales*; Longfellow's *Evangeline*; George Eliot's *Silas Marner*.

1898: Milton's *Paradise Lost*, Books I and II; Pope's *Iliad*, Books I and XXII; *The Sir Roger de Coverley Papers* in *The Spectator*; Goldsmith's *The Vicar of Wakefield*; Coleridge's *Ancient Mariner*; Southey's *Life of Nelson*; Carlyle's *Essay on Burns*; Lowell's *Vision of Sir Launfal*; Hawthorne's *The House of the Seven Gables*.

II. *Study and Practice*.—This part of the examination presupposes the thorough study of each of the works named below. The examination will be upon subject-matter, form, and structure.

The books set apart for this examination will be:

1895: Shakespeare's *The Merchant of Venice*; Milton's *L'Allegro, Il Penseroso, Comus, and Lycidas*; Macaulay's *Essay on Addison*.

1896: Shakespeare's *The Merchant of Venice*; Milton's *L'Allegro, Il Penseroso, Comus, and Lycidas*; Webster's *First Bunker Hill Oration*.

1897: Shakespeare's *The Merchant of Venice*; Burke's *Speech on Conciliation with America*; Scott's *Marmion*; Macaulay's *Life of Samuel Johnson*.

1898: Shakespeare's *Macbeth*; Burke's *Speech on Conciliation with America*; De Quincy's *The Flight of a Tartar Tribe*; Tennyson's *The Princess*.

The Conference recommends that the following scheme be offered as a suggestion or recommendation to colleges desiring to set an advanced examination in English.

Advanced Examination.

NOTE.—The candidate may choose either I or II.

I. A detailed study of a single period of English literature, and of not fewer than three authors belonging to it; as, for example, of the age of Queen Anne, with special reference to Pope, Swift, and Addison.

II. (a) Old English (Anglo-Saxon), chiefly simple prose and grammar, *or*

(b) Chaucer : *Prologue*, *Knights Tale* and *Nonne Prestes Tale*, including vocabulary, inflection, and prosody.

The Conference further recommends that the Commission of Colleges in New England on Admission Examinations, the New England Association of Colleges and Preparatory Schools, and the Association of Colleges and Preparatory Schools of the Middle States and Maryland, each appoint a committee of Conference to prepare, in joint session, lists of books for entrance examinations in English subsequent to the year 1898, to consider such other business as may properly come before it, and to report the conclusions reached to the bodies named above.

In presenting this report the committee deems it wise to offer a few words in explanation of the separate sections, in order that intelligent action may be taken upon the report as a whole.

1. The inquiries made by the committee lead to the belief that the preparatory schools desire the limits of the English examination to be closely defined. To meet this desire, as well as to promote the critical study of English literature, the books set for examination are divided into two classes: those to be read chiefly for their substance—that is, their literary or historical value—and those to be studied in detail with regard to diction, literary structure, and grammatical forms, as well as with regard to subject-matter.

2. The system of examination suggests principles upon which selections of books can be made. In order not to disturb existing courses in the preparatory schools, the books set in the requirements under the years, 1895, 1896, and 1897 are identical with those named in the present New England list. In the selections for 1898 certain distinct periods and types of literature are represented, historical sequence is considered, and prose and poetry have about equal representation. A recommendation for a joint

committee of selection for subsequent years is elsewhere embodied in this report. It is the opinion of the committee that the division into the two classes mentioned in section one and the adoption of definite principles of selection will prove of distinct advantage in making lists for future years.

3. The system suggested is a useful one for an association such as that of the Middle States and Maryland, which has in its membership colleges, scientific schools, and institutions somewhat diverse in character. The requirements can be divided, and thus flexibility of amount as well as uniformity of kind can be secured in preparatory school work. In some institutions desiring a less extended test, either section one or section two can be made to stand for the entire requirement in English. In other institutions the first section may be offered as a preliminary examination.

4. The system suggested gives opportunity for examination by presentation of original note-books certified by an instructor, containing the record of work done by the pupil when reading the books set and containing essays written on topics taken from the books read. This method, usually spoken of as the "Physics Method," is strongly urged by many teachers. The committee is not prepared to advise that the note-books be in any case taken as a substitute for the whole entrance examination, but is inclined to the opinion that the method can in many cases be employed to advantage in testing a portion of the work.

5. The requirement suggested for advanced examination, when such examination is found desirable, is one which does not conflict with the ordinary admission requirement and does not anticipate any part of the English work usually required in college. In presenting this requirement it may be well to say that it is not thought probable by the committee that any very general demand now exists for a system of advanced examinations in English. Yet in several institutions the plan of permitting advanced standing to be taken, on passing tests known as advanced examinations has been for some years in use in Latin, Greek, German, and French, and in mathematical and scientific branches, and has been successful in enabling earnest students to obtain the greatest possible benefit from their college and university work. The committee, therefore, feels that the present is a favorable time for the formulation of such a requirement for English work.